

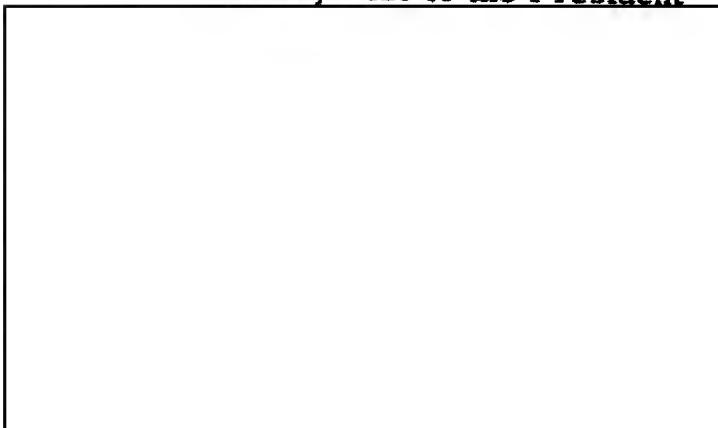
ER 61-3790

8 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Brig. Gen. Chester V. Clifton  
Military Aide to the President

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[redacted]  
Executive Officer

cc: Mr. McGeorge Bundy

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O/DCI [redacted]  
1 - DCI w/attachment  
1 - ER [redacted] w/attachment  
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Orig. - Hand-carried to White House

{EXECUTIVE RECORDING FILE - White House}

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Cuba is now in the grip of totalitarian terror, mass persecution and arrests.

It is estimated that approximately 200,000 people were arrested in all of Cuba during the first two weeks. 50,000 arrests were made in Havana alone, and in one small town of about 6,000 inhabitants, between Havana and Matanzas, 2,000 have been placed under arrest.

Of the 50,000 arrested in Havana, a total of 33,600 have been accounted for as of May 1, 1961:

6,000 in Principe Prison

5,000 in Cabana Prison

5,000 in Castillo Morro

4,000 in Blanquita Theater

10,000 in Palacio de Deportes

600 in Cuban G-2 headquarters

2,000 in various police posts.

Jail facilities have been completely overrun as a result of the vast number of arrests, and the government is establishing concentration areas where the people are treated like animals.

Prison facilities at Morro Castle could not accommodate the 5,000 prisoners assigned to it. An overflow of several thousand was jammed

into the castle moat where they were unable to lie down and where there were no sanitary facilities. Twice a day the militia sprayed this human moat with DDT. At another temporary concentration point, the Blanquita theater, 4,000 were held for 6 or 7 days under conditions resembling the "black hole of Calcutta". Sanitary facilities were limited to the three available theater toilets and the prisoners were fed only twice in six days. When the prisoners threatened to riot against these conditions, the guards paraded bloodhounds across the stage. The prisoners were finally moved from the theater to an unknown jail because after four of the imprisoned had been shot, some of the prisoners took guns away from the guards and attempted to burn the theater down. At Cabana, a fort across the bay from Morro, formerly used by Guevera as Headquarters, a Consular official said he had seen 60 people shot and that the Director of Cabana himself had shot 17. At the Principe Prison 86 women were crowded into one room. As a result of the packed conditions, two pregnant women suffered miscarriages.

Even the G-2, Castro's Secret Service, and the militia headquarters were unable to find out whether or not certain individuals were in jail, dead, or if in prison, where and why. One Cuban, for example, told a Western observer that he had just been released from jail (at midnight so that the Cubans could not see what shape he was in) and had returned

home to find that his wife had also been arrested when the G-2 found weapons in his garden. It was obvious that there was no coordination among Government departments as he would never have been released if his guards had known he had been hiding weapons.

Many foreigners including other Latin Americans, Europeans as well as Americans and Cubans were arrested. One European prisoner who was released on Saturday, the 29th of April, was completely bewildered when questioned as to the reason for his arrest. He had spent fifteen days in jail but no charges were made against him so he did not know why he was there. He had been photographed, given a number and fingerprinted. He confirmed the report that those prisoners who were freed have been released during the hours of darkness because the Cuban Government does not want the people to see the wretched condition of those who have been detained.

(It is estimated that there are several hundred U. S. citizens remaining in Cuba, although a precise figure is not possible because many are not registered). The number of U. S. citizens under arrest is unknown and their identification is made extremely difficult because they are normally deprived of their passports and other papers when arrested. Informed observers on the island believe it will be increasingly difficult for U. S. citizens to depart.